

Appl. No. 10/679,028
Amendment dated September 1, 2006

REMARKS

This Amendment is submitted in response to the Office Action mailed May 16, 2006. Claims 1-13 were submitted for examination. In the Action, claims 1, 8, and 11-13 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. 101 as being directed to non-statutory subject matter. All claims were rejected under 35 USC 103(a) as being unpatentable over Friedman et al (US 2003/0208556 A1) in view of Fuwa et al (US 2005/0102151 A1).

Claims 1, 3, 4, 8 and 11 have been amended, claims 2 and 12 have been cancelled, and new claims 14 and 15 have been added.

35 U.S.C. 101 Rejections

Claims 1, 8, and 11-13 were rejected as being directed to non-statutory subject matter (software). Claim 12 has been cancelled and claims 11 and 13 have been amended such that the claims as amended are directed to a computer program product embodied on a computer readable medium. With regard to claims 1 and 8, these claims are not directed to a software program, but rather are process claims reciting specific steps in a manner believed to be clearly statutory and appropriate. The claimed methods produce useful, concrete and tangible results that increase the ease, speed and efficiency of online product design, including the automated generation of product templates and the control of information displayed to the user on the user's display. Reconsideration and withdrawal of the rejection is respectfully requested.

35 U.S.C. 103(a) Rejections

Claims 1-13 were rejected under 35 USC 103(a) as being unpatentable over Friedman in view of Fuwa. As will be discussed below, Friedman and Fuwa, considered either alone or in combination, do not teach or suggest the invention as claimed in pending claims 1, 3-11 and 13-15 as amended.

Before turning to the cited references, the background and advantages of the current invention will be briefly reviewed. To assist customers in preparing useful and attractive personalized products in an online environment, printing service providers typically offer customers a range of choices of prepared templates having various themes and various combinations of images, color schemes, designs, etc. A customer may select a desired template and incorporate the customer's text or other customer content to design a personalized product. Many customers, in particular businesses, desire to present a uniform image to the public and, therefore, desire to create and use "matching" products, such as business cards, letterhead, return address labels, and so forth, all having a similar look and design features.

In the prior art, the design staff employed by the service provider would typically individually prepare each template for each product. This was time consuming and expensive and generally resulted in a limited selection of templates being available to the user. (See background discussion at [0004]-[0005]) As described in the pending application, Applicant structures product templates as combinations of separately defined and stored template component elements (e.g., a layout, a design, an image, a font scheme, a color scheme, etc.). (See [0028]-[0029]) By providing tools to the user, such as controls 310, that allow the user to pick and choose independently among a variety of possible template layouts, possible color schemes, and so forth, the user can try different

combinations of template elements and select the particular combination that yields the template design that is most desirable to that user.

The invention is particularly directed to methods, products and systems for incorporating the user's template component element choices from one template design into another template to automatically create a matching template design. For example, after a user has prepared a business card template having the user's desired template elements, a matching return address label template can then be automatically prepared by associating a return address label layout identifier with the identifiers of the color scheme, font scheme, etc. from the business card template.

Turning now to the cited references, Friedman discloses an example of a prior art system. The Friedman user chooses a template for a desired greeting card product from a set of templates provided by the service provider (See Fig. 6A). The user is then allowed to edit the three sides of the card product by adding and positioning personalized text entries, as desired. The user is provided font tools allowing the user to select a desired font and modify the font size, color and style (See Figs. 6C-6D and [0087]). There is no suggestion in Friedman of associating a product description identifier with a plurality of component element identifiers and then using at least some of the element identifiers as element identifiers of a different template, as claimed in claims 1, 11, and 14, nor does Friedman teach receiving a user request to initiate a product design session using a first template and then replacing at least one of the template component element identifiers in that template with other component identifiers from an earlier product associated with that user, as claimed in claims 8, 13 and 15.

Looking now at Fuwa, a system for ordering custom rubber stamps is described. A user is allowed to select a stamp template from a number of available templates (See Fig. 12) and then is presented with a screen allowing the user to select the ink color, the grip color, the desired quantity and provide personal data to appear on the stamp using text entry fields

(See Fig. 14). The Examiner cites [0038]-[0039] of Fuwa as teaching the use of product description identifiers as claimed by Applicant; cites [0038], [0044], Fig. 2 and Fig. 3 of Fuwa as teaching using element identifiers from one template as element identifiers of a different template; and cites [0041]-[0042] of Fuwa as teaching the displaying of identifiers associated with one or more earlier products associated with the user. Applicant respectfully disagrees and submits that Fuwa makes no teaching that is relevant to the pending claims.

As explained in the application at [0034], Applicant's "product description identifier" is assigned when a user initiates a product design session. Fuwa makes no teaching of such an identifier. Fuwa's Fig. 2 and paragraphs [0038]-[0039] disclose a product information database containing information correlating a stamp supplier identifier to the specific properties of the various types of stamp products available from that supplier. As stated in Fuwa at lines 5-7 of [0038], the information is stored "according to the stamp suppliers in association with a stamp supplier ID." Fig. 3 and [0044] of Fuwa disclose a database of supplier "distinction" information. As explained in [0044], the distinction code is simply an indicator of whether or not a given supplier handles a particular product. This information is vendor-generated reference data reflecting which specific stamp products are available from which specific suppliers. None of the information is created in response to or affected by the user's initiation of a product design session.

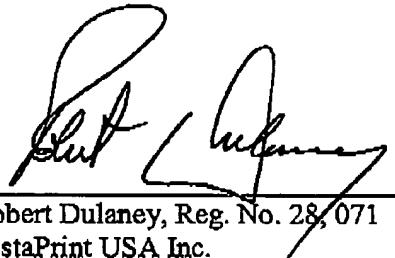
Regarding earlier products associated with a user, Fuwa maintains an order management database (See Fig. 4), but it is solely for internal vendor purposes. Nothing in Fuwa discloses or suggests retaining template component element identifiers of earlier user products, displaying to the user identifiers of earlier products associated with the user, and, in response to user selection of one of the identifiers, associating at least one of the component element identifiers of the selected earlier product with a product description identifier of a displayed template, and modifying the displayed template.

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In summary, Friedman and Fuwa, viewed either alone or in combination, do not teach or suggest electronic product template methods, products and systems wherein template component elements of a product template are identified by element identifiers and associated with a product description identifier and wherein at least some of the component element identifiers of a first template are used as template element identifiers of a second template. In light of the amendments and remarks, it is believed that pending claims 1, 3-11, and 13-15 are now in condition for allowance and favorable action on all claims is respectfully requested.

If the Examiner believes a phone call would serve to advance the prosecution of this case, he is respectfully invited to telephone the undersigned at the number below.

Respectfully submitted,



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